

people not to use the word “stimulus” when describing the President’s plan. Others are accusing anybody who criticizes it of being unpatriotic or playing politics. Well, as I have said before, there is a much simpler reason to oppose the President’s economic policies that has nothing whatsoever to do with politics: They simply don’t work. Yet, by all accounts, the President’s so-called jobs plan is to try those very same policies again and then accuse anyone who doesn’t support them this time around of being political or overly partisan, of not doing what is needed in this moment of crisis.

This isn’t a jobs plan. It is a reelection plan. That is why Republicans have continued to press for policies, policies that empower job creators, not Washington.

According to the Wall Street Journal, nearly a third of the unemployed have been out of work for more than a year. The average length of unemployment is now greater than 40 weeks, higher than it was even during the Great Depression. As we know, the longer you are out of a job, the harder it is to find one. That means, for millions of Americans, this crisis is getting harder every day. It is getting worse and worse.

We also know this: The economic policies this President has tried have not alleviated the problem. In many ways, in fact, they have made things worse. Gas prices are up. The national debt is up. Health insurance premiums are up. Home values in most places continue to fall. And, 2½ years after the President’s signature jobs bill was signed into law, 1.7 million fewer Americans have jobs. So I would say Americans have 1.7 million reasons to oppose another stimulus. That is why many of us have been calling on the President to propose something entirely different tonight—not because of politics but because the kind of policies he has proposed in the past haven’t worked. The problem here isn’t politics. The problem is the policy. It is time the President start thinking less about how to describe his policies differently and more time thinking about devising new policies. And he might start by working with Congress instead of writing in secret, without any consultation with Republicans, a plan that the White House is calling bipartisan.

With 14 million Americans out of work, job creation should be a no-politics zone. Republicans stand ready to act on policies that get the private sector moving again. What we are reluctant to do, however, is to allow the President to put us deeper in debt to finance a collection of short-term fixes or shots in the arm that might move the needle today but which deny America’s job creators the things they need to solve this crisis—predictability, stability, fewer government burdens, and less redtape. Because while this crisis may have persisted for far too long and caused far too much hardship, one thing we do have right now is the ben-

efit of hindsight. We know what doesn’t work.

So tonight the President should take a different approach. He should acknowledge the failures of an economic agenda that centers on government and spending and debt, and work across the aisle on a plan that puts people and businesses at the forefront of job creation.

If the American people are going to have control over their own destiny, they need to have more control over their economy. That means shifting the center of gravity away from Washington and toward those who create jobs. It means putting an end to the regulatory overreach that is holding job creators back. It means being as bold about liberating job creators as the administration has been about shackling them. It means reforming an outdated Tax Code and getting out of the business of picking winners and losers. It means lowering the U.S. corporate tax rate, which is currently the second highest in the world. And it means leveling the playing field with our competitors overseas by approving free trade agreements with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea that have been languishing on the President’s desk literally for years.

Contrary to the President’s claims, this economic approach isn’t aimed at pleasing any one party or constituency. It is aimed at giving back to the American people the tools they need to do the work Washington has not been able to do on its own, despite its best efforts over the past few years.

The President is free to blame his political adversaries, his predecessor, or even natural disasters for America’s economic challenges. Tonight, he may blame any future challenges on those who choose not to rubberstamp his latest proposals. But it should be noted that this is precisely what Democratic majorities did during the President’s first 2 years in office, and look where that got us. But here is the bottom line: By the President’s own standards, his jobs agenda has been a failure, and we can’t afford to make the same mistake twice.

After the President’s speech tonight calling for more stimulus spending, the Senate will vote on his request for an additional \$500 billion increase in the debt limit, so Senators will have an opportunity to vote for or against this type of approach right away.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for 1 hour, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10

minutes each, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with the Republicans controlling the first half and the majority controlling the final half.

The Senator from Nebraska is recognized.

(The remarks of Mr. JOHANNIS and Mr. ALEXANDER pertaining to the introduction of S. 1528 are printed in today’s RECORD under Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.)

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, I believe I have up to 20 minutes?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. There is 16½ minutes remaining on the Republican side.

Mr. ALEXANDER. Will the Chair please let me know when 5 minutes is remaining.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Yes.

PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Mr. ALEXANDER. Mr. President, tonight we welcome President Obama to the Congress to deliver a jobs address. The President will be coming at a time when we have had persistent unemployment at a greater rate than at any time since the Great Depression. No one should blame our President for problems with an economy that he inherited, but the President should take responsibility for making the economy worse.

Unemployment is up. The debt is up. Housing values are down. The morning paper reports we may be on our way—at least the chances are 50-50, the newspaper says this morning—to a double-dip recession. The number of unemployed Americans is up about 2 million since the President took office. The amount of Federal debt is up about \$4 trillion.

As I mentioned in discussing the proposals of the Senator from Nebraska, the President’s policies, rather than helping over the last 2½ years, have thrown a big wet blanket over private sector job creation. They have made it more expensive and more difficult for the private sector to create jobs for Americans.

Let me be specific about that. The President chose, 2 years ago, rather than to focus exclusively on jobs, to focus on health care. His proposal was to expand a health care delivery system that already cost too much, that was already too expensive. So we have new health care taxes and mandates that make the economy worse.

Why do I say that? I met, for example, with the chief executive officers of several of the nation’s largest restaurant companies. They reminded me that restaurants and hospitality organizations in the United States are the largest employers, outside of government, and that their employees are mostly young and mostly low income. One of the chief executives said because of the mandates of the health care law it would take all of his profits from last year to pay the costs, when it is fully implemented, so he will not be